



CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

APPROVED 5-4-2015

MEMBERS

George Moreau, Chairman
John Vieau, Vice Chairman
Fred Krampits
Frank Laflamme
James Tillotson
William Zaskey
Timothy McLellan

MINUTES
January 14, 2015

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

Members Present

Moreau, Vieau, Krampits (arrived 6:31), Laflamme, Tillotson, Zaskey, McLellan

Also Present

Daniel Garvey (Associate City Solicitor), Councilor Lamontagne, Councilor Brooks, Councilor Zygarowski, Mary Beth Costello (School Committee), Lee Pouliot (Acting Planning Director), Carl Dietz (Building Commissioner & CD Director), Vanessa Oquendo (IT Director)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

In compliance with the Open Meeting Law the Chairman asked if anyone in the audience was recording the meeting.

ITEM #1

ORDERED THAT THE SUM OF \$10,000.00 BE AND HEREBY IS APPROPRIATED TO THE FOLLOWING NAMED ACCOUNT:

MIS SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS (CITY COUNCIL TABLETS)
(ACCT# 11360004-585200)

SAID AMOUNT IS TO BE TAKEN FROM AVAILABLE FUNDS IN THE STABILIZATION FUND FOR CAPITAL BUDGETING PURPOSES (ACCT# 84001008-599980)

Councilor Laflamme stated that the reason this item was referred to committee was to obtain the rules for using these devices. It was not referred because the Council was questioning the appropriation of the money.

Vanessa Oquendo stated that a new policy titled Acceptable Use of City Technology Resources was just approved by the Law Department. This policy will govern the tablets that will be assigned to the Councilors.

Councilor Brooks stated that his concern is content filtering. He is concerned that if someone picks up the device and accesses sites not appropriate or if it is lost and someone finds it. Vanessa stated that the device

will be accessed through a code and if the device is stolen then the IT department can wipe it remotely. As far as content filtering Vanessa stated that she did not contemplate this because she doesn't expect people to view inappropriate sites. Councilor Brooks stated that just recently reported in the paper was a custodian from Chicopee Comp who he also did not expect to do anything inappropriate. Vanessa stated that she will look into content filtering. Councilor Brooks stated that as the host in a Windows tablet the IT department could put into place content filtering.

Councilor Zaskey questioned whether training will be provided for these tablets. Vanessa stated that training will be provided.

Councilor Laflamme questioned whether these tablets will have the capability to take photos which the Councilors can then view in the Chambers on the projector screen. Vanessa stated that these tablets will have the capability to take photos.

Mary Beth Costello stated that the School Committee uses I-pads and they are working out great.

Councilor Zygarowski questioned whether those that want hard copies will still be able to receive them. Vanessa stated that hard copies will be available.

Motion made by Councilor Vieau and second by Councilor Laflamme to approve.

Committee vote 7-0 favorable.

ITEM #2

ORDERED THAT THE SUM OF \$185,000.00 BE AND HEREBY IS APPROPRIATED TO THE FOLLOWING NAMED ACCOUNT:

C.D.B.G. ACCOUNT FOR UNIROYAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING STABILIZATION/PRESERVATION PROJECT

SAID AMOUNT IS TO BE TAKEN FROM AVAILABLE FUNDS IN THE UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE "FREE CASH" ACCOUNT.

Al Hanscam, Beta Group, Engineer on the project was present.

Councilor McLellan stated that many people that he has spoken to have told him that they do not see a practical reason to save this building. He further stated that the City already has an iconic building. The former library that no one seems to want to lease or purchase is an iconic building. He further stated that \$185,000 is a lot of money to gamble for possible future use.

Carl Dietz stated that there was a developer last week who expressed interest in the Uniroyal building but because the building is under containment CD couldn't get the developer inside the building.

Al Hanscam stated that developers will receive tax credits if the project is a preservation project. This is an incentive to potential buyers.

Councilor Laflamme stated that the city cannot get tax credits but the person who purchases the property gets tax credits. He further stated that this is a good incentive to sell. He also stated that to rebuild this type of building now would cost a lot of money. He also stated that he spoke with the Mayor and Carl Dietz because he wanted to make sure that the roof and drain would be repaired so that no further damage to the building would occur. He would not be supporting this order if the building was just going to be wrapped.

Councilor Vieau stated to rebuild this type of structure today would cost around \$10-20 million. He further stated that looking at it from a private sector standpoint this is a six floor sound structure that may have some future development versus starting from scratch.

Councilor Tillotson read the following letter from the Historical Commission:

January 14, 2015

President Moreau,

It is our understanding that the Administration Building on the Uniroyal property is in need of some immediate attention to stop the infiltration of water into the structure. It was recently presented to us by Lee Pouliot, Acting Planning Director, that the windows need to be boarded up and the roof needs waterproofing. The intention of these repairs is to stop the deterioration of the building for a few more years in order to give the City time to find an appropriate re-use and market the building.

The Chicopee Historical Commission feels that this is a very important building in the City's history and is very interested in seeing it preserved for future use. We strongly encourage you to support the funding necessary to provide the necessary repairs to preserve this iconic structure in the City of Chicopee.

Sincerely,

Joseph Pasternak, Jr.

Chairman, Chicopee Historical Commission

Councilor Tillotson stated that with this type of support it makes it easier to get historical credits. He further stated that you can't find the skilled craftsmen to be able to build this type of building today. He also stated that two of his biggest critics have called him and said that the city should keep this building and not demolish it.

Councilor Lamontagne stated there are about 2 more floors that need asbestos removal from this building. He questioned where the money will come from to remove the asbestos. Lee Pouliot stated that at this point there is no more EPA money available to clean up the asbestos that he is aware of. Councilor Lamontagne stated that parcel there is no more clean-up money coming in. Councilor Lamontagne also questioned the structural damage to the building. Al Hanscam stated that an assessment was done and the bones of the building are very good. The parapet is damaged. There is some cracking in the stairwell. That becomes part of the redevelopment cost for the preservation of a historical building. Councilor Lamontagne asked how much money it would cost to knock down the building. It was responded \$800,000.00.

Councilor Krampits stated that he is skeptical to spend the money to preserve the structure but he also doesn't want to spend money to demolish it. At this point it may be a good idea to mothball the building which will give potential developers tax credits and make the building more appealing.

Councilor Zygarowski stated that this is a worthwhile gamble. He feels that the taxpayers want to save this building. He also stated that when possible he would like a tour of this building.

Mary Beth Costello stated that the City needs to consider redevelopment of this site. The city needs to think about having 2000 students on Front Street and needs to consider what impact the development/re-use will have.

Carl Dietz stated that when the City sends out for RFPs it can specify its needs.

Councilor Brooks asked if the City was to raise the building up front at a cost of \$800,000.00 coupled with the already \$200,000.00 that's been invested what is the potential that there would be leaching under that building that would have to be remediated and where would the city put that? Carl Dietz replied that because that building was not part of the shop it was "clean" in there he assumes that there aren't any significant issues under that building. Michelin America is still responsible for clean-up of Uniroyal so if something was found there is some level of commitment from Michelin to clean up. Carl stated that in his mind he is not concerned for that parcel. Councilor Brooks stated he doesn't want to see what happened to the Essex building in Holyoke to happen to this building in Chicopee.

Councilor Zaskey stated that this building is worthwhile to preserve this as a historic building in the City of Chicopee. He felt that the money will be recouped once it is sold.

Motion made by Councilor Laflamme and second by Councilor Moreau to approve.

Committee vote 7-0 favorable.

ITEM #3

Minutes – June 16, 2014. Motion made to approve. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.